

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### STATUS REVIEW OF MEXICAN DUCK

Most of what are known to be Mexican ducks in the United States may actually be hybrids--crosses between the endangered Mexican duck and mallards. Their status is now being reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of the Interior agency, said today.

The status review will determine whether any populations of the Mexican-like ducks should be proposed for reclassification from endangered to threatened or removed from the list altogether.

The Mexican duck was originally listed as an endangered species in 1966 because of hybridization with the mallard, reduction of wetlands in its former range, and loss of its preferred riparian marsh habitat along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. At that time it was estimated that about 30 to 40 percent of the Mexican-like ducks were possible hybrids.

About 15,000 to 50,000 genetically pure Mexican ducks are present in central Mexico, the main range of the species. However, it is now known that most ducks found in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and northern Mexico are hybrids. A recent 2-year study by the New Mexico Game and Fish Department reports that almost 90 percent of all Mexican-like ducks saved as museum specimens from the United States were actually hybrids.

Persons with information that may assist in determining the status of this species are invited to write the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. All comments received by February 1, 1978, will be considered.

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